

Message Text

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64

ACTION SS-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8215

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 3547

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CVIS US UR IS PINT

SUBJ: AGURSKY TO RECEIVE EXIT PERMISSION

REFS: A. STATE 197017 (SEPT 9, 1974)

B. MOSCOW A-326 (AUGUST 11, 1974)

C. MOSCOW A-374 (SEPT 27, 1974)

D. MOSCOW 3018

1. AS WIRE SERVICES REPORTED OVER WEEKEND, LONGTIME
"REFUSENIK" AND WELL-KNOWN SOVIET JEWISH DISSIDENT
MIKHAIL AGURSKY WAS INFORMED MARCH 14 HE WILL SOON RECEIVE
EXIT PERMISSION FOR ISRAEL. IN MARCH 16 CONVERSATION WITH
CONSOFF, AGURSKY MADE PLAIN HE WOULD GO TO ISRAEL AND HAD
NO INTENTION OF IMMIGRATING TO US.

2. ALTHOUGH JOYOUS OVER HIS OWN GOOD NEWS, AGURSKY NOT
CONFIDENT THAT RECENT EXIT VISA APPROVALS FOR VARIOUS
MOSCOW REFUSENIKS (SEE REF D)
REPRESENTED MAJOR CHANGE FOR THE BETTER IN SOVIET
EMIGRATION POLICY. AGURSKY MENTIONED THAT MOSCOW
JEWISH ACTIVIST ALEXANDER LUNTS HAD BEEN CALLED TO KGB
HEADQUARTERS MARCH 15 AND THREATENED WITH IMPRISONMENT
UNLESS HE DISCONTINUED ALL "POLITICALLY ORIENTED ACTIONS."
AGURSKY ALSO MENTIONED POSSIBILITY THAT TWO JEWS WHO
RECENTLY MADE QUICKLY SNUFFED-OUT EMIGRATION PROTEST IN
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FRONTOF LENIN LIBRARY WOULD RECEIVE TWO- TO THREE-YEAR

PRISION TERMS, FAR STIFFER THAN TERM OTHERS RECEIVED FOR SIMILAR ACTION IN LAST 18 MONTHS. FINALLY, AGURSKY CITED FINDINGS FROM RECENT TRIP THROUGH BYELORUSSIA WHERE, HE CLAIMED, MANY JEWS IN PROVINCIAL TOWNS HAD RECEIVED ISRAELI VYZOVS BUT WERE INTIMIDATED BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO REFRAIN FROM SUBMITTING EXIT VISA APPLICATIONS.

3. AGURSKY BELIEVES SOVIET GOVERNMENT AND SECURITY FORCES CURRENTLY FORMULATING "NEW RULES OF THE GAME" FOR JEWISH EMIGRATION AND DISSENT. WHILE NEW RULES FAR FROM CLEAR, THEY SEEM TO CONSIST OF ATTEMPT TO APPEASE WESTERN OPINION BY SELECTIVE APPROVAL EXIT APPLICATIONS OF MOSCOW-BASED, POTENTIALLY ARTICULATE JEWS AND OTHERS. BALANCING THIS, MASS OF UNARTICULATE, LARGELY UNPRIVILEGED JEWS IN PROVINCES ARE BEING COWED INTO NOT SUBMITTING EXIT APPLICATIONS. FINALLY, PENALTIES FOR DISSENT ARE BEING INCREASED. POLICY MAY BE DESIGNED TO SHOW GOODWILL OF SOVIETS IN RESOLVING CERTAIN "PROBLEM" CASES THAT MAY CATCH EAR OF WESTERN PUBLIC OPINION WHILE CHOKING OFF IMPULSE TO MASS EXODUS OF SOVIET JEWS.

4. EMBASSY BELIEVES EXIT APPROVAL FOR AGURSKY ALSO COULD HAVE NEGATIVE CONNOTATON FOR DISSIDENT JEWISH MOVEMENT. AGURSKY HAS SERVED IS PAST AS BRIDGE BETWEEN JEWISH ACTIVITISTS AND OTHER DISSIDENT GROUPS, SUCH AS SAKHAROV FOLLOWERS, RUSSIAN NATIONALISTS,ETC. HE HAS ALSO BEEN PROMINENT LINK BETWEEN ACTIVIST JEWS AND WESTERN PRESS. BY ELIMINATING THIS DUAL LINK, SECURITY FORCES MAY BE LAYING GROUNDWORK FOR FURTHER ISOLATION OF JEWISH ACTIVISTS WITHIN SOVIET SOCIETY. STOESEL

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